

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 are pending in the application. Claims 1-26 stand rejected. Claims 1, 19, 24 and 26 have been amended. In view of the following, all rejected claims are in condition for allowance.

Rejection of Claims 1-4, 7, 9-12, 19-22 and 24-26 Under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) As Being Anticipated By Kirby, et al. ("Kirby")

Claim 1

Claim 1 recites retrieving with a vessel a mission module operable to influence non-module resources of the vessel.

For example, referring, *e.g.*, to FIGS. 1 and 2 and paragraphs 16-24 of the present application, a ship (vessel) 100 includes a hull structure or frame 115 that is designed to accept one or more mission modules 105. Mission modules 105 are designed with different capabilities that, when interfaced with the ship 100, provide the ship 100 with mission-specific functionality for respective types of missions. For example, the mission module 105 may enhance the non-module, *i.e.*, permanent, resources of the ship 100 for compatibility with the type of mission(s) for which the module is designed. Consequently, the ship 100 may include a general operator/control station, which the computer system of the module 105 can configure for the corresponding type of mission via an interface with the ship's computer system. Or, the module 105 may carry extra fuel and supplies for a long range mission.

Kirby, on the other hand, fails to teach retrieving with a vessel a mission module operable to influence non-module resources of the vessel. As cited by the Examiner, and as shown at, *e.g.*, FIGS. 1-2, Kirby teaches a ship 10 capable of receiving and carrying floatable containers 16. However, Kirby fails to teach or suggest that these containers 16 are in any way operable to influence non-module resources, such as fuel, supplies, or ship system data, of the ship 10.

Claims 19, 24 and 26

Claims 19, 24 and 26 are patentable for reasons similar to those discussed above in connection with claim 1.

Claim 11

Claim 11 recites maneuvering a vessel toward a mission module such that a bay of the vessel captures the module, and coupling a system interface of the mission module to a system interface of the vessel.

Kirby, on the other hand, fails to teach both a vessel bay that captures a module and a system interface of the module coupled to a system interface of the vessel.

Claims 2-4, 7, 9-10, 12, 20-22 and 25

Claims 2-4, 7, 9-10, 12, 20-22 and 25 are patentable by virtue of their respective dependencies from claims 1, 11, 19 and 24.

Rejection of Claims 5-6 and 8 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) As Being Unpatentable Over

Kirby

Claims 5-6 and 8 are patentable by virtue of their dependency from claim 1.

Rejection of Claims 13-15 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) As Being Unpatentable Over

Kirby In View of Vernede

Vernede fails to supply the teachings missing from Kirby, namely maneuvering a vessel toward a mission module such that a bay of the vessel captures the module, and coupling a system interface of the mission module to a system interface of the vessel. As such, Kirby and Vernede, taken each alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the limitations recited in claim 11. Accordingly, claims 13-15 are patentable by virtue of their dependency from claim 11.

**Rejection of Claims 16-18 and 23 Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) As Being Unpatentable
Over Kirby In View of Aavitsland**

Aavitsland fails to supply the teachings missing from Kirby, namely 1) retrieving with a vessel a mission module operable to influence non-module resources of the vessel, or 2) maneuvering a vessel toward a mission module such that a bay of the vessel captures the module, and coupling a system interface of the mission module to a system interface of the vessel. As such, Kirby and Aavitsland, taken each alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the limitations recited in claims 11 and 19. Accordingly, claims 16-18 and 23 are patentable by virtue of their respective dependencies from claims 11 and 19.

CONCLUSION


In view of the foregoing, claims 1-26 are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 425.455.5575. The Applicant's attorney respectfully requests the Examiner to telephone the undersigned prior to issuing an Office Action that rejects any pending claim in this case.

In the event additional fees are due as a result of this amendment, you are hereby authorized to charge such payment to Deposit Account No. 07-1897.

Respectfully submitted,
GRAYBEAL JACKSON HALEY LLP

Dated: January 7, 2005



P.G. Scott Born
Registration No. 40,523
155 - 108th Avenue N.E., Suite 350
Bellevue, WA 98004-5901
(425) 455-5575